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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 8 December 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, information on the situation in the field of environment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the ecological consequences of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 79.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
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ANNEX

The situation in the field of environment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the ecological consequences of the sanctions against that country

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development proved to be a watershed in the understanding of the inseparability of the environment and development, the unity of nature and man and the interdependence of the world.

Important commitments were made in Brazil, which were enshrined in the principles of the Rio Declaration and a comprehensive agenda for action leading into the twenty-first century.

Yugoslavia actively contributed to the negotiations of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 and at Rio signed the treaties on global climate change and biodiversity, which have been submitted to the Parliament for ratification.

Sustainable development in Yugoslavia as in other developing countries is only possible with new and additional financial assistance and access to safe and environmentally sound technologies. With the imposition of the most comprehensive embargo ever implemented against any State, the implementation of commitments reached at Rio by Yugoslavia becomes impossible.

The sanctions are contrary to numerous international documents in the field of environment. They derogate one of the fundamental premises of the Conference concerning the establishment of partnership among the components of the international community, without discrimination and isolation of any country or nation.

The adverse effects of the sanctions are immeasurable, particularly the long-term and indirect ones, because environmental concerns and development issues cannot be viewed only in terms of local effects. The scope of the effects is broader and multidimensional.

By isolating Yugoslavia through the ending of almost all forms of communications, all aspects of the environment have been jeopardized, which might have extremely unfavourable consequences on the ecological, economic and social status of the population.

With sanctions in place, economic problems multiply, unemployment soars, social tensions are heightened, markets close and the transfer of technological know-how and almost all international cooperation come to a halt. Crime is on the rise. Whether consciously or not, natural resources are mercilessly wasted, even those that were under special protection. The readiness and possibilities of the society to invest in the environment are drastically reduced.

The global impacts of sanctions are mostly of a long-term nature. Pollution is likely to rise and be "exported" to other countries or vice versa. Needless to say, pollution cannot be contained within national borders.

In the wake of sanctions, cooperation in various international projects has been discontinued. International financial assistance has failed to materialize. It is estimated that 23 projects from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, verified at international level, would have attracted $1.5 billion in foreign investments.

The realization of many international conventions is brought into question. Yugoslavia has ratified 4[illegible]

The development of safe and clean technologies has been slowed down.

Scientific and technical cooperation has been also terminated, as well as study trips and the use of databases of many international and regional organizations (the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Community, Hexagonale, the Mediterranean project etc.). The development of technologies and environmental measures has been slowed down. The damage caused by the suspension of cooperation on many international projects is irreversible. The cooperation in the protection of the Adriatic against pollution within the Mediterranean Action Plan has ceased. The Institute of Maritime Technologies at Kotor, Montenegro, also actively participated in the project but, due to the sanctions this cooperation has been suspended. The cooperation in the prevention of marine pollution as a result of hazards at sea has also been suspended.

There has been a substantial depletion of the country's natural resources (exploitation of ore, water, forests, land), with consequences that exceed local concerns and that can accelerate global changes of environment (climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, biological diversity). The cutting down of forests for fuelwood as a source of energy, particularly in the most affected zones and adjacent settlements, has brought about increasing emissions of pollutants into the air and water and a lasting or long-term degradation of flora and fauna. Substitution of imported fuels used in industry and homes (oil and gas) by fuels of domestic origin (coal) has resulted in increased environmental pollution. The shortage of fuel has further increased the danger of the "high risk" regime of production and maintenance with all its side effects.

Failure to obtain spare parts for installations, originating from the countries that enforce sanctions against Yugoslavia, can lead to major accidents endangering not only the facilities concerned but the region as a whole.

The system for the control and monitoring of the quality of the environment is jeopardized owing to reduced budget inflow and lack of many components for its normal functioning.

There is a serious threat of a further increase in pollution as a result of inadequate environmental protection due to the lack of imported intermediate inputs and the reduced economic capacity of enterprises. Due to the sanctions (lack of spare parts) and the ever-worsening economic situation in the country, the Djerdap hydropower plant has not been able to maintain adequately its installations and facilities for the protection of the riparian area. If the problem of their regular maintenance is not solved before next spring, 100,000 hectares of land may be flooded next year.

Furthermore, unless there is an urgent repair of the dam near Mojkovac, holding 7 tons of toxic waste in the mountains of the Yugoslav Republic of Montenegro, these substances could poison the Tara and Danube Rivers if the dam burst.

The sanctions have also created obstacles for Yugoslavia in its implementation of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer: namely, Yugoslavia is not in a position to speed up and replace chlorofluorocarbon technologies.

The sanctions interfere with the realization of an exceptional ecological project, that is, the idea of Montenegro (one of the Yugoslav republics) becoming an ecological state.

Natural and cultural resources under the protection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Kotor, Durmitor, Sopocani, Studenica) have been endangered, as a result of the aggravated conditions of implementation of protective measures and the adverse effects of increased environmental pollution.

The Security Council should consider at least partial lifting of the sanctions, particularly in areas such as scientific and cultural cooperation - the right of every man to life and a sound environment should be ensured, including the realization of individual and collective human rights.

The Federal Government of Yugoslavia has been investing the utmost efforts aimed at the re-establishment of peace in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in an attempt to search for solutions to the Yugoslav agony through dialogue, agreements and compromise. Every effort should be made to normalize the relations that would contribute to the success of the London Conference which created the possibility of ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and eliminating uncivilized political struggle by all available means.